

Enjoy the Holidays with Comfort Food and Homegrown Greenery

This is a great time of year for everything locally grown and produced to really shine. From food to greenery we have your Christmas season covered. Stop by a local tree lot for that perfect NC grown tree. Or you can take a trip to the mountains to choose and cut your own. Local nurseries and greenhouses have beautiful and unique poinsettias in a variety of sizes, greenery and Christmas cactus available for that special gift or decoration. Remember to give friends and family a North Carolina basket that could be filled with honey, hot sauce, apples, sweet potatoes, peanuts, and a beautiful plant all grown or produced in North Carolina. They will love it!

From all of us at Local Dish; Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Season's Greetings.

Spiced Peanuts

2 cup granulated sugar

1 cup water

2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground cloves

1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

3 cups roasted shelled NC peanuts

Boil sugar, water and spices until syrup reaches hard crack stage (295-310 degrees). Drop peanuts into syrup. Stir until nuts are coated. Pour out on foil (sprayed with non-stick cooking spray) or a silt pat and allow peanuts to cool. Store spiced peanuts in an airtight container.

Lisa's Notes: Don't know what to get your favorite uncle? This is a great gift idea, especially for men. They will enjoy a beautiful container of spiced NC peanuts to sit by their favorite chair.

Glazed Ham

1 (7.5 pound) fully cooked smoked ham

½ cup – 2 cups water, depending on the size of your pan

4 Tablespoons blueberry & blackberry preserves

1 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. smoked paprika

1 tsp. red wine vinegar

1 tsp. molasses

Whole cloves (optional)

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. You will cook your ham for 12 minutes per pound depending on the size. Mix together the preserves, cinnamon, smoked paprika, red wine vinegar and molasses. Score your ham to make a diamond pattern. Place a whole clove at each intersection of your lines (this is optional). Brush the glaze over the ham and place in a roasting pan. Cook for half the cooking time and then add the water to fill the pan 1 inch full and continue cooking the remaining time.

Lisa's Notes: I found the preserves at Harris Teeter. This would also be good with a red currant jelly. Scoring the ham and adding the cloves makes for a beautiful presentation for the holidays.

German Chocolate Pound Cake

1 (4 ounce) bar Baker's German's Sweet Chocolate

2 cups sugar

1 cup shortening

4 eggs

2 teaspoon vanilla

2 teaspoon imitation butter flavoring

1 cup buttermilk

3 cups all-purpose flour, sifted

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

Partially melt chocolate over hot water. Or you can melt it in the microwave for 1 minute. Stir and then add 30 seconds if necessary. Remove and stir rapidly until melted. Cool. Cream together the sugar and shortening. Add eggs, flavorings and buttermilk and mix to combine. Then add the flour, baking soda, and salt. Mix well. Blend in chocolate. Pour into a well-

greased and floured 9 inch tube pan. Bake at 300 degrees for about 1 ½ hours. Be sure to remove from pan while still hot and place under a tightly fitting cover until thoroughly cooled.

German's Sweet Chocolate Glaze

1 (4 ounce) bar Baker's German's Sweet Chocolate

1 Tablespoon shortening

1 cup confectioner's sugar, sifted

½ teaspoon vanilla

Dash of salt

Melt 1 bar of Baker's German Sweet Chocolate and 1 tablespoon shortening in ¼ cup water over low heat or in the microwave for 1 minute adding 30 seconds if necessary. Mix 1 cup confectioner's sugar and a dash of salt. Blend in ½ teaspoon vanilla. For a thinner glaze, add a small amount of hot water.

Lisa's Notes: This recipe is from my grandmother Bullock who was a fabulous cook! You can enjoy this cake with or without the glaze – it tastes great either way.

Sweet Potato Casserole

3 cups fresh NC Sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed

2 eggs, slightly beaten

¼ cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 cup sugar

½ teaspoon salt

1 stick butter, melted

2 Tablespoons maple syrup

1 Tablespoon honey

Topping

1/3 stick butter, softened

1 cup brown sugar

1/3 cup flour

1 cup chopped nuts

Mix all the ingredients from the sweet potatoes to the honey in a large bowl. Pour into a greased 2 1/2 quart casserole dish sprayed with non-stick cooking spray. Mix all topping ingredients; sprinkle over top of the sweet potato mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

Lisa's Notes: Quick, simple and delicious. North Carolina sweet potatoes add color and flavor to any holiday meal. Peel, chop and boil your sweet potatoes until tender or bake them in the oven, allow to cool, slice in half and scoop out the potatoes.

Ice Cream Coffee Punch

6 cups water

1/2 cup plus 1 Tablespoon instant coffee

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup chocolate syrup

1/2 gallon milk

2 gallons vanilla ice cream (4- 1.5 quarts)

Bring water to a boil and add coffee, stir and let cool. Add salt and chocolate syrup. Stir well and chill.

In a large serving bowl, cut ice cream into milk; stir well and refrigerate.

Before serving, pour coffee mixture into punch bowl with ice cream mixture.

Lisa's Notes: This has been a favorite recipe for years. I have served this at baby showers, bridal showers, luncheons and parties. Have fun with the garnish depending on the time of the year and the occasion.